

# The Blueprint in Action

Office to End Homelessness  
Quarterly Newsletter

## The Regional Conference



The Regional Conference on Ending Homelessness was held February 1, 2006 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. Over 300 people from across Hampton Roads came together to learn ideas and

*"Feedback from conference participants was overwhelmingly positive."*

build common understanding on strategies that will end homelessness. Mayor Fraim and the Mayors of Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Suffolk,

as well as Councilman Cliff Hayes of Chesapeake, and Isle of Wight County Board Chair Tom Wright all participated in the event. The Executive Director of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, Philip Mangano provided a keynote address and met privately with the elected leaders

to discuss ideas on how we could work regionally to achieve the goal of ending chronic homelessness in ten years.

The conference featured experts from across the country who led training sessions on:

- developing permanent housing;
- rapidly moving individuals and families out of shelter and into housing;
- cost-effective residential substance abuse programs;
- mental illness recovery;
- improving outcomes for ex-offenders; and
- employment strategies for the homeless.

Feedback from conference participants was overwhelmingly positive. The Regional Taskforce on Ending Homelessness, which together with The Planning Council organized the event, is already getting to work on implementing some of the ideas that were generated through the conference.

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THE SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS  
REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS

# The Blueprint in Action

## Project Homeless Connect

On December 8, 2005 Norfolk held its first Project Homeless Connect (PHC) event bringing together local, state, federal and community organizations as well as volunteers, for the purpose of assisting single homeless adults connect to available services in the community. Project Homeless Connect was part of a 20+ City initiative throughout the nation coordinated by the US Interagency Council on Homelessness. By mobilizing 250 community volunteers at the Norfolk Scope we served over 300 homeless individuals in the City of Norfolk, many of whom were recruited and transported by a dedicated outreach team that canvassed the entire city throughout the day.



*"The results of the one day event were astounding"*

The results of the one day event were astounding: 175 medical screenings completed (5 were transported to the ER, and 49 follow-up visits were scheduled with 100% attendance), 135 individuals registered with the Virginia

Employment Commission for job search assistance; 17 persons or families left the event with permanent or transitional housing; 31 legal cases were processed; 70 benefits applications were taken; and 603 hot meals were served.



Clients agreed too. In the exit interview conducted over 75% of the individuals served responded with a "yes" when asked if they got what they came for. This lets us know that Project Homeless Connect is both needed and appreciated in our City.

In an effort to continue with our mission, we will be hosting another PHC on August 17, 2006.

Please be in touch with our office if you are interested in supporting this great project.



**NATIONAL  
PROJECT  
HOMELESS  
CONNECT**



A Special Thanks to Everyone that made this project a Success:

### AARP

American Red Cross, Southeastern VA Chapter—Dental clinic

### BB&T

Disabled American Veterans

Dollar Tree

Downtown Norfolk Council

Eastern Virginia Medical School

Eggleston Services

Farm Fresh Charitable Foundation

Goodwill Industries

Harry's Barbeque

Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia

Lens Crafters

Lion's Club Vision and Hearing Van

Norfolk Community Services Board

Norfolk Department of Human Services

Norfolk Department of Public Health

Norfolk Public Defenders Office

Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Operation Blessing Dental Van

Opportunity Inc. One Stop Workforce Center

### Second Chances

Self Protection and Awareness Organization

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

Sentara Healthcare Foundation

Social Security Administration

Step Up, Inc.

STOP organization

SunTrust

TACT

The Planning Council

Touch of Patience

United Way of South Hampton Roads

US Dept. of Veteran Affairs

Virginia CARES

Virginia Department of Child Support Enforcement

Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services

Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Virginia Employment Commission

Virginia Social Ventures

**Especially to our 200 + Volunteers**

## Ten Year Plan Progress: How Are We Doing?

Implementation Update



Norfolk's Blueprint to End Homelessness, created by the work of the City's Commission to End Homelessness, identified many issues in the City that must be addressed in order to end this disturbing social problem. After extensive community input, the City identified seven key initiatives to begin work on immediately (as of September, 2005).

One is to establish a central intake to streamline homeless services intake and develop a resource and referral mechanism for the community. This would improve data collection on the homeless and help identify what services would best serve this population. In order to achieve central intake, it is important to have consensus among the providers to participate in such a process and a system that is cost-effective and beneficial to homeless persons seeking assistance. At this writing, a working group has convened on two occasions and an outside agency submitted a funding request to implement a resource and referral service. We do not yet have consensus on an approach among the agencies, therefore this remains in the development stage.

The second task is to establish an affordable housing trust fund. This will enhance the City's housing options for the very low income by developing new innovative programs to help with better affordable housing options. The Virginia General Assembly nearly adopted a State fund which could be used to match local contributions, but ultimately deferred the matter until the next Session. We are optimistic

that State support will materialize in the near future.

A third project in our action plan is to replicate a Rapid Exit program. This model developed in Minneapolis, Minnesota successfully reduced the numbers of families seeking shelter and the length of stay in shelters by roughly 50% by working with service providers to focus on rapidly re-housing families, moving them out of shelter in under 30 days. The Office to End Homelessness received funding for this project and while unable to replicate the model precisely due to a lack of responders to an RFP has served 43 individuals and families by either preventing a homeless episode or placing them successfully in permanent housing. Funds have been awarded for the 2007 budget year as well and the Office to End Homelessness is working with the family shelters and other stakeholders to redesign an RFP that will more closely match the approach in Minnesota.

Another initiative endorsed was the implementation of Housing First projects to assist homeless individuals (especially chronically homeless) secure permanent supportive housing, avoiding long shelter stays and expensive hospitalizations. By the end of calendar year 2006, we anticipate the City's Permanent Supportive Housing supply will have increased by 65% over 2005 levels. The Norfolk Community Services Board has initiated a Housing First project for individuals with serious mental illness known as "My Own Place." This project will assist 12 individuals

who have extensive hospitalization and street homelessness histories live independently and achieve gains in their recovery through stable, supported, permanent housing. This project will be featured in our next edition of *The Blueprint in Action*.

Additionally, a 24 hour care center was identified as a key initiative in the City. The concept is to provide homeless adults with a safe place to congregate during the day. This center would also serve as a vehicle to assist

*"We are gratified by the support of the City, its Departments and independent agencies, and a strong network of homeless providers"*

homeless persons access main stream resources, partake in life skills and employment programs and other supports. At this time a local day center, Salvation Army's 19th Street facility, which had lost its funding, was awarded a grant to continue and expand its operations. The center provides meals, job placement and counseling, as well as case management support to all homeless individuals seeking services.

The Blueprint is in full motion. Though the Office to End Homelessness is a small operation, (a new Management Analyst, Alisa Berry, came on board in March), we are gratified by the support of the City, its Departments and independent agencies, and a strong network of homeless providers. We will continue to report on our progress in the next newsletter.

## A Special Visitor

*"The Assistant Secretary was highly complimentary of the work of the City of Norfolk to tackle our homeless issue"*

On March 10, 2006, U.S. Department of Labor Assistant Secretary for the Veterans' Employment and Training Services, Charles S. (Chick) Ciccollea, came to the City of Norfolk to discuss Veterans issues as they relate to homelessness in Hampton Roads. The meeting, attended by Mayor Paul Fraim, allowed stakeholders from Hampton Roads to provide their perspective on issues facing homeless veterans and to hear from the Assistant Secretary on the administration's plans and initiatives to tackle the problem. A panel discussion was presented by Katie Kitchin from Norfolk Office to End Homelessness; Mr. Willard Smith, Executive Director of the Vetshouse; William E. Haefner Jr., MSW, LCSW from Veterans Homeless Outreach; Kurt Clemons from Virginias'

Employment Council-Veterans Services; and Bernard Boykins, representing Disabled American Veterans.

The Assistant Secretary was highly complimentary of the work of the City of Norfolk to tackle our homeless issue and identified promising strategies to work more closely with resources available through the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs.



Assistant Secretary for the Veterans' Employment and Training Services, Charles S. (Chick) Ciccollea



# CITY OF NORFOLK BLUEPRINT OF THE PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

## Finding Their Way Home

"John" is a chronically homeless individual with severe mental illness. For years, he has lived on the street, surviving on discarded food from a dumpster at a local convenience store. Neighbors called the City numerous times to express concern about John. The Norfolk Community Services Board's PATH outreach team repeatedly engaged with John, offering him services to apply for benefits, but housing was elusive. Finally, on a cold day in December the PATH worker noticed that his symptoms were serious enough to be considered life-threatening. He was involuntarily committed.

Once in the hospital, John began to recover. He was provided medications and a safe, warm place to sleep. The PATH worker continued to work with him and hospital social workers broached the idea a possible placement in an Assisted Living Facility in Western Tidewater. To the PATH worker's surprise, he agreed to go. John has made a dramatic recovery. He has gone from extreme isolation and grave illness to an almost outgoing member of the community at his residence. It is difficult to even recognize him as the man he once was.

Kudos to the PATH team for their persistence.

### **Office to End Homelessness**

810 Union Street, Suite 306  
Norfolk, VA 23510

757-664-4488—office  
757-664-4424—fax

*"Everyone Deserves a Place to Call Home."*

## A Note From Our Director:

### A Year to Remember and A Promising Future

On March 1st, we celebrated the First Anniversary of the Office to End Homelessness, and what a year it has been! Working with the Com-

*"Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of the last year has been the changing mindset in our community."*

mission to End Homelessness, we launched the City's ten-year plan, "The Blueprint," in May, 2005, making us the second jurisdiction in Virginia to take this step. Under the direction of Mayor Fraim and

our City Manager, Regina V.K. Williams, we reached out to our regional counterparts in South Hampton Roads to establish a Regional Taskforce on Ending Homelessness. While many are skeptical of this concept, it is hard to argue with the progress we have made together in less than a year. The first regional efficiency housing project for homeless adults in the nation will be opening its doors in December. Our conference on ending homelessness featured national-caliber experts and was a tremendous success. In August, a regional Affordable Housing Database will go live, providing access to housing resources for

thousands of homeless and imminently homeless people in Hampton Roads — and we've only just begun.

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of the last year has been the changing mindset in our community. We are proving by our actions that this is a problem that is not so intractable, not so impossible; and it won't cost us a billion dollars. Every day, we are making progress toward ending homelessness. Soon, when nearly 100 new permanent housing beds are filled, when persons with serious mental illness have a place to live with the right supports, when our chronic substance abusers have a place to heal — you will see the difference on our sidewalks and in our parks. It may not be tomorrow, but it's not so far away.

Thank you for your role in making this year so successful!



### *Did You Know?*

*The average length of time to change a habit/behavior?*

*- 2 to 3 years*

*The typical length of substance abuse treatment*

*- 28 days*